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## ABSTRACT

Designed to help parents make informed decisions about child care, preschool, and kindergarten placements, this book answers typical questions other parents ask about schooling decisions. Chapter 1 is a resource section based on current research and educational theory, and provides a brief summary of the best and most recent thought on early childhood issues. It gives information on how and why schools and child day care centers differ. Chapters 2 through 6 focus on specific age groups. Chapter 2 deals with children from birth to 18 months, and chapter 3, with children from 18 months to 3 years. Chapters 4 through 6 cover 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds, respectively. Each age-group chapter discusses characteristics typical of children in that age group and answers questions their parents ask. Chapter 7 deals with various problems families may encounter when seeking child care. It examines child care choices for special needs or handicapped children, and gives information for parents who work unusual hours. This final chapter also discusses legal issues that concern parents, such as how to report child care wages to social security, and includes other information about the Internal Revenue Service's regulations dealing with child care. The appendices contain information that is generic to all age groups, including state listings of licensing and resource and referral services, tax form examples, and check sheets to use when visiting prospective child care providers. (AS)

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